The Indian submission proposed that the scope of mandate for the negotiations under paragraph 31 (i) should include those environmental agreements where there must have been effective participation in the negotiations by countries belonging to different geographical regions and by countries at different stages of economic and social development along with other criteria. India submitted that Japan's qualification of an MEA as one that *"...reflects the interests of major Parties concerned, such as Parties with substantial trade interests, actual and potential major producers and consumers of materials concerned"* is perhaps more appropriate for a plurilateral agreement since it introduces a distinction between WTO Members by dividing them into formal categories — "major Parties" and "others". The submission stated that this qualification, in Indian view, is not relevant in this context.

Restriction on textiles import in America and European countries

†2476. SHRI KAPIL SIBAL:
SHRI LAJPAT RAI:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that import of textiles has been restricted to a particular limit due to prevailing quota system in America and European countries;

(b) if so, the reaction of Government in this regard;

(c) whether it is also a fact that there is no restriction on the import of textiles from said countries to India; and

(d) if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDI): (a) and (b) Till December 31, 1994, the exports of textiles to certain developed countries including U.S.A., member countries of the European Union and Canada had been governed by bilateral textile agreements entered into between India and these countries under the aegis of the Multi-

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

Fibre Arrangement (MFA), outside the rules of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). With effect from January 1, 1995, the quantitative restrictions (import quotas) in the bilateral agreements under the MFA, are being governed by the Agreement on Textiles and Clothing (ATC) contained in the Final Act of the Uruguay Round negotiations of the GATT. Presently, our textiles and clothing exports face restraints in U.S.A., European Union and Canada.

One of the central elements of the Agreement on Textiles and Clothing (ATC) is the four-stage process for the progressive integration of textiles and clothing products as specified in the Annex to the ATC into GATT 1994 over a ten-year transition period. The integration process has however not led to any meaningful removal of quotas by the restraining countries so far. India has raised the issue of lack of progressive liberalization in international trade in textiles bilaterally and also at the World Trade Organization. In accordance with ATC, all the textile quotas would be phased out and textile sector fully integrated into WTO by 1st January, 2005.

(c) and (d) India is not maintaining any restriction on imports of textiles as no restrictions were being maintained by it under the former MFA on 31 December, 1994. Further, quantitative restrictions that were maintained for balance of payment reasons have been removed on all products including textile products by 31st March, 2001.

Leather goods export park in West Bengal

2477. SHRI V.V. RAGHAVAN:
SHRI J. CHITHARANJAN:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are considering a proposal to set up a leather goods export park in West Bengal;

(b) if so, the details and proposed location of the same;

(c) whether there has been a demand to give a Special Economic Zone (SEZ) status to this proposed park; and